Cryptozoology, 11, 1992, 102–108
© 1992 International Society of Cryptozoology

CHAMP QUEST AT LAKE CHAMPLAIN, 1991–1992

RICHARD A. DEUEL AND DENNIS J. HALL
P.O. Box 261, Vergennes, Vermont 05491, U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes our investigations of Champ—the Lake Champlain Monster—resulting from the formation of a new organization called Champ Quest.

The Lake Champlain Phenomena Investigation (LCPI), headed by Joseph W. Zarzynski, has led the search for Champ evidence since 1974, conducting extensive camera and sonar surveillance of the lake. LCPI began publishing annual field reports in *Cryptozoology* in 1982; its last field report was for 1990 (Joseph W. Zarzynski, 1990, LCPI Work at Lake Champlain, 1990, *Cryptozoology*, Vol. 9: 79–81).[1] With conclusive evidence still lacking, we hope that Champ Quest, through joint cooperative efforts, will ultimately be able to attain the proof needed to identify the animals involved.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Champ Quest fieldwork so far has primarily consisted of lake surface surveillance from shore. We established a permanent residence near the lake, and have conducted our investigations on a time-available basis. Deuel undertook about 270 hours shore-watching in 1992, concentrating on Bulwagga Bay, Crown Point, Button Bay, and Basin Harbor. Hall also conducted several hundred hours of shore-watching during 1992, mainly at Kent's Bay and Button Bay.

Yasushi Kojo, from the University of Arizona, in Tucson, also conducted surveillance in 1992. He operated at Malletts Bay during September 14–23, mainly observing from late afternoon until midnight. No sightings were reported.

Also conducting fieldwork in 1992 was Gary Burton, from Rhode Island, who used a Furuno FCV-661 sonar unit with a 50 kHz transducer having a range of 0–1,152 feet (0–350 m). Burton operated a four-person raft in The Narrows during the period August 6–21. He reported five anomalous sonar contacts (see below).

[1] Joseph Zarzynski has recently been heavily involved in an underwater archaeology project in Lake George—south of Lake Champlain—so LCPI fieldwork and the annual field reports have been put on hold temporarily.—Editor.

RESULTS

We have obtained five Champ sighting reports—one of them a land sighting report—for 1991, and 30 sighting reports for 1992. These are presented below in chronological order. In addition, we present details on a possible 1992 land crossover spot, and the five 1992 anomalous sonar contacts reported by Gary Burton. One of the 1991 sightings and six of the 1992 sightings were made by the authors.

The five 1991 sighting reports uncovered to date are listed below:

1) About March 23, 1991; 9:30–9:45 p.m.; out of Orville's Marsh into Otter Creek. Todd Huestis was riding his ATV along a toe path when his headlight lit up what appeared to be a black animal crossing the path. It made enough noise as it crashed through the marsh woods that he could hear it over the sound of his engine. It was off the ground as high as his chest, and had about 15 feet (4.5 m) of tail, which he might have ridden over. It was slow-moving on land, but when it reached the water, it quickly disappeared. He returned the next morning, and found a V indentation in the mud. He also reportedly found push-back prints, each with two "toe" marks.

2) About June 23, 1991; early evening; from Button Bay to Kent's Bay. One of us (Hall), observed a "neck on the surface" at the south end of the bay. As it headed south, Hall drove south in excess of 75 m.p.h. (120 k.p.h.) and caught a glimpse of it from Arnold's Bay. Continuing south, he observed it in Kent's Bay, between Mud Island and the shore. "Champ was in 4 feet (1.2 m) of water, thrashing its long neck back and forth against the surface," he reported. "Then its entire body was rolling and thrashing in the shallows." Right after it disappeared, a boat rapidly approached the area, circled once, and left.

3) September 20, 1991; 11:00 a.m.; Crown Point Bridge. Rosemarie Capuano and Louise Wheelock, while driving over the bridge, observed an animal northeast of the bridge. The head resembled that of a horse, 1.5–2 feet (45–60 cm) long. There were three bumps ("scallops"), each 5 inches (13 cm) wide, down its neck, which was 3.5–4 feet (1–1.2 m) long. Its back angled down into the water 2 feet (60 cm). It was dark, blackish-gray in color.

4) October, 1991; late afternoon; The Narrows; calm; overcast. Paul Keller and a guest. They observed an animal 1,000–2,000 feet (ca 300–600 m) from Basin Harbor Dock heading northeast. They described it as "something the size of a horse's head leaving a good size wake." It headed in a straight line, stopped in mid-lake, turned south, then went north and was lost beyond point."

5) Fall of 1991; about 11:00 a.m., and later at 1:00 p.m.; Crown Point Bridge and Bulwagga Bay. We were informed by Loretta, who runs Al's Deli

Mart in Crown Point, that her son and a friend had sighted Champ off of the bridge, and had described it "as big as a whale." She called Mike Kimball, who owns The Bridge Restaurant, and he went out and reportedly took photos of the animal's back. We have seen one of his photos, and all it shows is a long line of disturbed water in the distance, off of the Crown Point Historic Site. Loretta also stated that, 2.5 hours later, others in Port Henry believed they had seen two Champ animals in Bulwagga Bay.

The 30 1992 Champ sighting reports uncovered to date are listed below.

1) May 12, 1992; 10:00–10:10 p.m.; calm; bright moon. One of us (Deuel) observed through binoculars a bluish-white column of light to the southwest, and over 0.5 miles (800 m) away. It appeared as if something was reflecting the moonlight. It slowly followed the New York shoreline for 20–30 minutes. Sometimes it appeared as a bright flash, other times as a pinpoint of light, and sometimes all that could be discerned was that "something" was there. Possible moonlight reflecting off of Champ's eyes. Possibly a boat.

2) May 31, 1992; 5:57 p.m.; Bulwagga Bay; mirror calm; cloudy. Don and Rose Waters and Bernie and Barbara Austin were having coffee outside the Waters' camp at Moriah Town Beach when, for 5 minutes, they observed an animal about 400–500 feet (121–152 m) from shore, moving south into the bay. They observed two humps, described as "black" and "the color of a whale," which submerged and reappeared three or four times. Something under the surface was making a wake a few feet ahead of the humps. After the humps submerged for the last time, the wake could still be seen. A boat had passed in front of the camp just prior to the sighting, but the witnesses were sure that that wake had already dissipated. Don Waters took one inconclusive photo of the animal's wake. About 20–25 minutes after the sighting, he spotted a similar wake, through his binoculars, leaving the bay.

3) June 1, 1992; about 5:00 p.m.; Bulwagga Bay; calm. While motoring south on Route 9N, just south of the Pines Restaurant, in an area called the Rock Cuts, one of us (Hall) observed an animal for 3.5 seconds, 600 feet (182 m) away. A dark green "neck" was seen lying on the surface for 2 seconds; it then went straight up, and then back down. He observed the animal again 4 minutes later out near the buoys. The "neck" had a "tiny taper on the end." A boat appeared in the area, and seemed to be looking around for something.

4) June 3, 1992; evening; Button Bay. Over a one-hour period, one of us (Hall) glimpsed an animal through his binoculars sticking its neck up and down four times. It was about 0.5 miles (800 m) away, between Button Island and the northwest point of the bay. Six feet (1.8 m) of neck suddenly appeared, moved north at a tremendous speed, and disappeared around the point.

5) June 19, 1992; between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.; Northwest Bay. The witnesses were Daniel Curtin and Linda Sabella. While sitting in the lounge of the Westport Yacht Club, Daniel noticed two distinct "wave forms" in the bay, described as "rolling walls of water," each 10 feet (3 m) long, and 1¾ feet (53 cm) high.

6) June 21, 1992; about 5:30 p.m.; between Gull Island and Light House Point, north of Isle La Motte. While perch fishing, Lawrence Gamelin observed an animal for 10 minutes about 400 feet (121 m) from the boat. He described it as "a large, dark hump about 5 feet (1.5 m) long, and 18 inches (45 cm) high." About 5 minutes later, he observed a "long round part which appeared to be attached to the hump." The animal submerged when he started the boat motor.

7) About June 26, 1992; 4:30–5:00 p.m.; Northwest Bay; perfectly flat; humid, gray. For 5 minutes, from inside the Westport Yacht Club, Amy Guglielmo and a coworker observed an animal about 200–400 feet (60–121 m) from shore, which slowly drifted 50 feet (15 m) to the southeast. They moved out onto the deck, and observed two very dark, greenish-black, round-shaped humps. After a few minutes, the humps submerged.

8) End of June, 1992; 9:49 a.m.; Button Bay; rough. While some friends were swimming at Button Bay State Park, Todd Remick observed a black, diamond-shaped head surface and submerge near Button Island.

9) Late June, 1992; 5:30–6:00 p.m.; Crown Point Bridge; still. From the end of Port Henry Pier, Yvonne and Andy Mendez observed an animal on the right end of the bridge, close to land, moving slowly towards Bulwagga Bay.

10) Early July, 1992; early evening; Arnold's Bay; overcast; light rain. Jo Pasby and grandchildren, Erin and Mark Irving, observed an object from shore. It "looked like a dolphin (size more like a whale)"; "rolled over twice like a dolphin moving along"; "upturned boat."

11) July 4, 1992; evening; Button Bay; calm. While conducting lake surveillance, one of us (Hall) observed a dark wake between Button Island and shore, moving south. A dark object appeared on the surface in an undulating fashion, appearing and disappearing. A boat passed in its path, but it still kept its form. It moved south into the bay, and was in and out of sight for 3 minutes before disappearing. Ten photos were taken with a 35mm camera of what appear to be two objects, one following the other.

12) July 7, 1992; 3:30 p.m.; Bulwagga Bay. While motoring along Route 9N, an anonymous witness observed an animal through rock cuts 0.5 miles (800 m) out in the bay. The animal had a dark green head, a neck, and two humps 8 feet (2.4 m) behind.

13) July 9, 1992; 3:15–3:20 p.m.; Bulwagga Bay; calm. While motoring north on Route 9N, Frank Soriano had his wife pull over so he could videotape the lake. While parked just south of the Pines Restaurant, he

began narrating that maybe he would be lucky enough to videotape Champ. While zoomed in on a seagull, he observed an animal with his unaided eye to the north, about 0.75–1 miles (1,200–1,600 m) away, moving southwest. It was described as: "a large tree stump, larger on the bottom, round on top"; "like a snail's head without antennae"; "black with shades lighter than black, maybe seaweed green?"; "moved like a periscope thorough the water." Twice he watched the animal slowly bend over and come back up. He panned in the direction of the animal, which he could not see through the camera's viewfinder, but he did capture it on videotape. The tape shows the animal popping up and down very quickly, moving through the water, and diving forward. After examining the tape, we believe that Soriano filmed a loon.

14) July 11, 1992; 4:45 p.m.; Willsboro Bay; 0.5 miles (800 m) north of Indian Bay Marina; rough. While trolling for salmon, Richard LaValley and a friend noticed an object west of the boat, moving parallel and in the same direction. "All you'd keep seeing was these black spots coming up at the surface," LaValley stated. They observed the object for 3 minutes before taking three photos. After examining the photos, we believe he photographed a wave.

15) July 6 or 7, 1992; Kimball Dock. Young Sam Pettibon observed an animal that stuck out of the water 3–4 feet (91–121 cm). It had three "horns or feelers" on its head. The head turned and then submerged.

16) July 15, 1992; 3:00–4:00 p.m.; off Basin Harbor Club; calm; nice and sunny. Two anonymous French-Canadian couples who were sitting on the deck outside the main dining room informed a passing employee that they had just seen "a whale" out in the lake. They were not familiar with Champ, and when it was suggested to them that that is what they had seen, they laughed and were adamant that what they had seen was a whale.

17) July 15, 1992; 7:30 a.m.; off point leading into the bay of Essex Marina; perfectly calm; crystal clear. While driving north on Route 22, one of us (Hall) observed an object 600 feet (182 m) away, heading south to northwest into the bay. Description: "A perfect arch sprung out of the water for a full second"; "you could see right through the bottom. Its muscles quivered, and then it snapped down and slightly forward. Dark green with a sheen."

18) July 19, 1992; 7:30–7:45 p.m.; just north of Button Bay; calm. While at the rocky point at the northwest end of the bay, Justine Anderson, Patrick Dean, and 8 other people observed two humps which headed north, and sent a wave into shore.

19) Mid-July 1992; Bulwagga Bay; rough, 2–3 foot (60–90 cm) waves. Yvonne and Andy Mendez, while off of Port Henry pier, observed an object on the left side of the pier. It bobbed up and down, similar to a log, and then disappeared. The object was in a black area of calm water, and was 50 feet (152 m) long.

20) July 22, 1992; Bulwagga Bay; 10:00 a.m. Debby Baker, a lifeguard, when arriving for work, observed an animal off Port Henry pier. Description: "A big black thing breaking the water's surface with slight waves."

21) Late July/early August, 1992; Shelburne Bay; 11:00 p.m. Judy Martin heard splashing, and saw what looked like a person's arm sticking out of the water. Co-witness Dennis Jones only remembers hearing a splash.

22) August 1, 1992; about 5:30 p.m.; Appletree Point; calm. Jay Lyons, Larry Salters and several others observed for 3–4 minutes an animal from North Beach. It was heading north at about 0.50–0.75 miles (0.8–1.2 km). It first appeared as a "peculiar wave" until the light hit it at a certain angle. Then three humps were seen following a "misty" area of plowed water. It disappeared past the point.

23) August 7, 1992; 10:00 a.m.; off of Basin Harbor Club. While riding on a bike-path behind the main dining room, Kate Esterline observed a strange wave off the southwest corner of the bay. She observed 5 feet (1.5 m) of an animal's back, which reminded her of a submarine. It headed north.

24) August 8, 1992; 6:00 p.m.; 5 miles (8 km) south of Alburg (north of Isle La Motte). While taking a rug off her clothesline, June Jones observed an object about 55 feet (17 m) off-shore, moving south. Description: "The thing just glided through the water showing the humps going in and out of the water." Spaces could be seen beneath the humps. It resembled "a huge eel" in that it was cylindrical. She screamed for her husband, Theodore Jones, who arrived just in time to see its tail submerge, and a long line of bubbles.

25) September, 1992; Crown Point Bridge. As his wife Eileen drove them heading west over the bridge, a Mr. Contarino observed something sticking out of the water off of Crown Point Museum.

26) Early September, 1992; 4:00 p.m.; Bulwagga Bay. While driving south on Route 9N, Joseph Drake and his wife observed an animal moving along the edge of the bay towards Crown Point Bridge. They pulled off the road by the Pines Restaurant, where other cars were pulled off and the passengers were watching the same thing.

27) September 11, 1992; 6:10 p.m.; Bulwagga Bay; clear. While motoring along Route 9N, Lora Clark observed an animal 300 feet (91 m) away. Description: "Two cars ahead of me stopped. I stopped, looked to my left, and there in the bay was Champ. I saw a long neck, head, and three humps." The neck was over 5 feet (1.5 m) long.

28) Late September 1992; Arnold's Bay; wavy; partly cloudy. Mark Palmer had just finished swimming in the bay when he heard four or five splashes. For 20 seconds, he observed an animal 200 feet (60 m) from shore heading south. It had darkish brown humps with patches, followed by a cylindrical tail which moved in a side-to-side motion, and with a fork at the end which

splashed the water as it moved sideways. The first hump submerged, then the second, then the tail.

29) Fall, 1992; 0.5 miles (800 m) south of Crown Point Bridge. Duane Stevens, while driving along Route 9N, observed a boat-sized wake being made by something under the water.

30) November 8, 1992; 4:30 p.m.; off Kent's Island. One of us (Hall), while conducting surveillance from Button Bay boat access, observed three objects for 12–15 minutes to the south and just west of Kent's Island. Description: "Three objects, like necks, sticking 8 feet (2.4 m) out of the water and moving south. While watching through 10 × 50 binoculars, a fourth neck suddenly stuck straight up out of the water to the left, but alongside the others. Same size in appearance."

The possible Champ land crossing is summarized below: November 10, 1992; 1.2 miles (1.9 km) down Ft. Cassin Road, off of Sand Road. Thomas Phillips, who frequently walks the road, observed a strange "groove" across the road, which he had not seen the day before. Even with the groove, on the north side of road, was a path of matted-down grass, 2–3 feet (60–90 cm) wide and 60 feet (18 m) long, leading out of Porter Bay. On the opposite side of road, the path continued for 9 feet (2.7 m) into Otter Creek. During our inspection of the area a month later, there were still signs where something large had crossed over, with both banks of the road hollowed out in a depressed half-circle.

The five anomalous sonar contacts made by Gary Burton are listed below: 1) August 10, 1992; late morning; off Basin Harbor. Close encounter with a large and fast-moving target. Large, dense soundings at 450 feet (137 m). It was tracked into surface noise. It was very likely moving from the deeper water up to near the surface. 2) August 10, 1992; Palisades; evening. "Two significant targets, the first at 800 feet (243 m), the second at 600 feet (182 m). They were both sharply defined. I lost each of them after 15 seconds or so." 3) August 13, 1992; midday; from camp north of Palisades. "The range was approximately 300 feet (91 m). It was likely a school of fish. There was a fairly strong echo; however, it was not well defined." 4) August 18, 1992; afternoon; off of Diamond Island. Strong trace at a range of 600 feet (182 m). 5) August 19, 1992; mid-morning; south of Palisades, about middle of the narrows. "There was a solid sounding at 900 feet (273 m) which was a sharp, well-defined trace."

Future Plans

We plan to continue our extensive shore surveillance, to collect eyewitness reports, and to educate the public. We would also like to deploy sub-surface sonar-triggered cameras.